

1 JEAN E. WILLIAMS,
2 Deputy Assistant Attorney General
3 SETH M. BARSKY, Chief
4 S. JAY GOVINDAN, Assistant Chief
5 RICKEY D. TURNER, Senior Trial Attorney
6 U.S. Department of Justice
7 Environment and Natural Resources Division
8 Wildlife and Marine Resources Section
9 999 18th Street
10 South Terrace, Suite 370
11 Denver, Colorado 80202
12 (303) 844-1373
13 rickey.turner@usdoj.gov

Attorneys for Defendants

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA**

14 WILDEARTH GUARDIANS,

15 Plaintiff,

16 v.

17 UNITED STATES FISH AND
18 WILDLIFE SERVICE and UNITED
19 STATES FOREST SERVICE,

20 Defendants.

CASE NO. 4:13-cv-151-RCC

**STIPULATION OF VOLUNTARY
DISMISSAL**

1 WHEREAS, in this case, Plaintiff brought various claims under the Endangered
2 Species Act (“ESA”), 16 U.S.C. § 1533 *et seq.*, challenging Defendants’ conservation
3 strategy concerning the Mexican spotted owl (“owl”) in the 11 National Forests
4 comprising Forest Service Southwestern Region (Region 3). More specifically, Plaintiff
5 alleged that the decisions made in FWS’s programmatic 2012 Biological Opinions
6 (“BiOps”) for the 11 National Forests were arbitrary and capricious and that the Forest
7 Service was not complying with either its substantive or its procedural duties under the
8 ESA. ECF No. 10.

9 WHEREAS, Defendants disputed those claims and the Parties briefed summary
10 judgment. ECF Nos. 50-62.

11 WHEREAS, on September 12, 2019, the Court granted in part and denied in part
12 Plaintiff’s motion for summary judgment. ECF No. 89. The Court held that FWS failed to
13 adequately assess the owl’s recovery in its programmatic jeopardy analyses and that the
14 2012 programmatic “BiOps simply do not provide a route to recovery or way to
15 accurately assess it. The no-jeopardy determination is unsupported, arbitrary, and
16 capricious because the finding failed to account for recovery” of the owl. ECF No. 89 at
17 24. The Court also found that the USFS violated its substantive obligations under the
18 Section 7 (a)(2) ESA by relying on those BiOps. *Id.* at 36-37. The Court then granted an
19 injunction on all Forest Service timber management actions on the six National Forests
20 that operated under the 2012 programmatic BiOps – i.e., the Lincoln, Santa Fe, Cibola,
21 Carson, Tonto, and Gila National Forests – and ordered Defendants to reinitiate Section 7
22 formal consultation under the ESA. ECF No. 89 at 38; ECF No. 98.

23 WHEREAS, pursuant to the Court’s order, Defendants reinitiated formal
24 consultation on the Forest Plans for the Lincoln, Santa Fe, Cibola, Carson, Tonto, and
25 Gila National Forests.

26 WHEREAS, in December of 2019 Plaintiff sent 60-day notices of intent to sue
27 under the Endangered Species Act to Defendants regarding the Forest Plan BiOps for the
28 Apache-Sitgreaves, Cibola, Coconino, Coronado, Kaibab, and Prescott National Forests.

1 WHEREAS, the Parties subsequently agreed to narrow the scope of the Court's
2 injunction. ECF Nos. 99-102.

3 WHEREAS, Defendants filed a motion under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure
4 59(e) asking the Court to alter its summary judgment order. ECF No. 104. That motion is
5 pending.

6 WHEREAS, Defendants have completed reinitiated Section 7 formal consultation
7 on the Forest Plans for the Lincoln, Santa Fe, Cibola, Carson, Tonto, and Gila National
8 Forests and issued new BiOps for each of those Forest Plans, which supersede the BiOps
9 at issue in this lawsuit.

10 WHEREAS, Defendants filed motions to dissolve the Court's injunction, ECF
11 Nos. 112, 126, and Plaintiff opposed those motions. Those motions are pending.

12 WHEREAS, in order to resolve this lawsuit, the parties, through their authorized
13 representatives, and without any admission of fact or law with respect to Plaintiff's
14 claims, have reached an alternative arrangement to resolve the claims raised in Plaintiff's
15 lawsuit. *See* Attachment A hereto (October 26, 2020 response to WildEarth Guardians'
16 December 2019 60 day notices of intent to sue).

17 NOW, THEREFORE, THE PARTIES STIPULATE AS FOLLOWS:

- 18 1. All counts in the above-captioned lawsuit shall be, and upon entry of the order
19 below, dismissed with prejudice;
- 20 2. The current injunction is dissolved in its entirety;
- 21 3. Defendants withdraw all their pending motions; and
- 22 4. Defendants agree that Plaintiff is entitled to reasonable attorneys' fees and
23 costs pursuant to the fee shifting provisions of the Equal Access to Justice Act,
24 28 U.S.C. § 2412(d) and/or the ESA, 16 U.S.C. § 1540(g)(4). The Parties will
25 attempt to resolve the appropriate amount of fees and costs within 120 days of
26 entry of this stipulation. The Parties further agree that this Court will retain
27 jurisdiction to decide any dispute regarding attorneys' fees and costs. *See*
28 *Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Ins. Co. of Am.*, 511 U.S. 375, 378 (1994).

1 It is so stipulated.

2
3 Dated: October 27, 2020

Respectfully Submitted,

4 /s/ Steven Sugarman
5 STEVEN SUGARMAN
6 Steven Sugarman
7 347 County Road 55A
8 Cerrillos, New Mexico 87010
9 (505) 672-5082
10 stevensugarman@hotmail.com

11 *Attorney for Plaintiff*

12 JEAN E. WILLIAMS,
13 Deputy Assistant Attorney General
14 SETH M. BARSKY, Section Chief
15 S. JAY GOVINDAN,
16 Assistant Section Chief

17 /s/ Rickey D. Turner, Jr.
18 RICKEY D. TURNER, JR.
19 Senior Attorney
20 U.S. Department of Justice
21 Env't & Natural Resources Division
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23 999 18th Street
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF system, which will send notification of such to the attorneys of record.

/s/ Rickey D. Turner, Jr.
RICKEY D. TURNER, JR.